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INSTANT NIGGERS

Editorial

THE DRUG CULTURE

RACE AND SCHOLARSHIP

Theatre Review

CLAYTON RILEY

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Contents

EDITORIAL

Instant Niggers 3

Race and Scholarship

by Richard A. Long 4

The Drug Culture

by LNS 8

SHORT STORY

NUT-BROWN: A Soul Psalm

by Clay Goss 12

NEWS IN BRIEF

16

BOOK REVIEW

Defender of the Angels

by Toni Cade Bambara 20

THEATRE REVIEW

Boesman and Lena

by Clayton Riley 21

POETRY

For Joan

by Zack Gilbert 11

Slave Ship

Runaways

by Sam Cornish 11

Mind Protruding

by Richard Latta 19

First, They Woke Up

by Terry Stokes 22

PHOTO ESSAY

by Richard Reaves 23

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RACE AND

At the beginning of the century William E. B. DuBois said, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line -- the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." No one has stated so eloquently what we all recognize as truth today. It is important to remember, however, that when DuBois wrote that sentence in the second essay of *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903 it was not at all obvious to his readers that this was a truth.

No one man so represents in his life and loyalties the meaning of the title I have chosen for this essay as does DuBois. And to him I shall return repeatedly as I share certain

like going to him over a thousand miles and taking him by the lapels and saying, "Dear, dear jackass! Don't you understand that the past is the present; that without what was, nothing is? That, of the infinite dead, the living are but unimportant bits?"

I am afraid that we are surrounded, inundated, outshouted by jackasses of all sizes, shapes, descriptions, and colors today who decry history and who exclaim that history is nothing, but the past is meaningless, everything begins "now" and with -- here is the significant word -- "me." *Now* and *me*. The theme song of

people she wrenched from what until recently scholarship was content to call their "primordial savagery."

To men of color the contemplation of this historical event still causes tingling of the skin, dryness in the mouth, difficulty in breathing. This is, perhaps, the call of race. But it would be dishonest to deny that the reading of the grim record of the Middle Passage disturbs now, and has ever since the eighteenth century, the dreams of many a white man. It would be more than ungracious to ignore the fact that one of the most readable accounts of the subject now available we owe to the pen of a white Englishman, Basil

"I HAVE NOT EVER HEARD OF A BLACK WOMAN ASKING WHETHER OR NOT A DIAMOND

ideas on race, racism, and our time of crisis -- ideas which I know will be controversial and disagreeable to many. And while I shall not be giving a lesson in history in any narrow sense, I confess that the framework of my thought, the universe of my discourse, is historical. I believe passionately that those who do not know their history are condemned to repeat it endlessly, and that much of the present ferment in the land and indeed in the world is the punishment inflicted upon the guilty, those guilty of such ignorance, a punishment of which, alas, the ignorant innocent share too great a part.

DuBois tells us in his monumental work, *The World and Africa*, the following anecdote:

I remember once offering to an editor an article which began with a reference to the experience of last century. "Oh," he said, "leave out the history and come to the present." I felt

much of the tumult and turmoil we hear today is self-explanatory, self-defeating. It is an insult to those who have thought and suffered. It is the back of the hand to those who ask, "What of the morrow?" It is the plain, violent assertion of ignorance and egotism no matter what the high cause in which it is proclaimed.

America and Africa -- Africa and America -- what affinity lies between the two? A human bond, a historical connection, a continuum of culture and spirit.

That human bond is the bond of color, the bond of travail, the bond of fatality. For Africa, dark mother, saw torn from her teeming womb millions of her Black sons and daughters to feed the economic necessities of an avaricious transplanted Europe, which sought to impose her will on the Red people she found dispersed over what scholarship still fitfully calls a "virgin continent," and on the Black

Davidson. And it would be a blatant dislocation of history to ignore the fact that the Black men who passed into the Middle Passage were first seized in their fields, their houses, at work, or at prayer, by other Black men, and transported by them to the coastal factories where they were stored for shipment. It would be a travesty of truth to deny that some of the African kingdoms now sentimentally treated as high points of Black achievement arrived at the status by selling Black bodies to white merchants.

Africa and America. A cultural bond. The interest that Black men in America have had in Africa has always been great. It is not new nor in its newer forms is it an improvement. I do not say that interest in Africa has always been intelligent or widespread. But I have not yet seen evidence that it is today more intelligent, and the number of Black men engaged seriously in the study of Africa at the present moment is

SCHOLARSHIP

by RICHARD A. LONG

not very impressive.

I think, however, that at this time in our history there is a tendency -- understandable in human terms -- to use Africa alternately as a crutch and as a club to resolve externally complexes which we, each of us, need to resolve internally.

But we must note that at a time when no white Americans were interested in Africa south of the Sahara, Black Americans were. Many points of view were represented: colonization, missionizing, exploitation. The African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in Philadelphia in the eighteenth cen-

The present writer is accepting without question the findings and generalizations put forth in the above work, insofar as they relate to the Negro in Africa. Quite another matter, however, is the effort made by Professor Herskovits to exhibit a wealth of African cultural survivals as having been retained in American Negro life. Here the author of *Myth of the Negro Past* seems in a peculiar sense to follow in the very footsteps of those writers whom he has attacked most freely. ... the basic assumption appears to be the same for both Herskovits and his predecessors: The Negro did in fact bring much of his African

a new species. The African on these shores Africanized everything -- he touched -- religion, music, work habits, the English language -- and his was, and in the main still is, an African cosmos. Deprivation was the conscious intention of the enslaver. His failure was almost complete. However, up until yesterday, everything about the Black man in America that has been studied, both by Black and white men, has been studied uniquely from the Euro-American point of view. Naturally such a procedure can only reveal Euro-American traits. The residual matter has been either ignored or described as independent, but local

WHICH MAY BE HEADED HER WAY IS A PRODUCT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S SLAVE MINES."

tury. And the name Africa was often on the lips of Black men in America throughout the nineteenth century who usually referred to themselves as Afro-American.

The profound bond of Africa and America up until the present moment has not, however, with very few exceptions, been at the level of that articulate commonality of interests so insisted upon by DuBois, but at the far more fundamental level of culture in the anthropological sense. The awareness of this fact is recent and grudging. The traditional position has been quite different -- and it is a position taken by Black and white Americans alike. The Black authors of *Black Rage*, a recent best-seller, accept the traditional position without question, and since I suspect that they refreshed themselves on the subject with the Stanley Elkins' study *Slavery*, I will quote from Elkins. In commenting upon Melville Herskovits' *Myth of the Negro Past*, he says:

cultural background with him, and this background did substantially influence his subsequent life and behavior in this country. This assumption is not accepted in the present work. On the contrary, few ethnic groups seem to have been so thoroughly and effectively detached from their prior cultural connections as was the case in the Negro's transit from Africa to North America.... It is the very thoroughness of such detachment, and the wide contrast between the way it operated in North America and Latin America, that seems to constitute a major problem for explanation.

The truth of the matter is that there is no major problem for explanation. The Elkins statement is an example of scholarship gone awry. No people has ever been completely deprived of its heritage. If this had indeed been the case of the African in the United States, we would in fact be in the presence of

invention. This particular denial of the Black American's cultural heritage is only a special case of the rejection of the Black man from world history by European and American scholars alike.

I have discovered to my horror and dismay that Black sociologists today are still lined up behind Frazier in the so-called Frazier-Herskovits controversy of 25 years ago, in spite of all the water that has since run under the bridge. Lined up there, because like Frazier, they have not bothered to find out much about the African societies of which Herskovits was the first important American student.

Frazier's classic study of the Black family, for example, must be revised in the light of our African data. Yet it is the Frazier thesis which underlay the famous and infamous Moynihan report, which has made Professor Moynihan white America's leading expert on the Black man.

cont next pg

The present passionate desire on the part of many young Black people to proclaim their identification with Africa would please me greatly if a tiny portion of the time and energy expended in this pursuit were devoted to learning a little about the Africa of their fathers. As it is, much of the public ferment and excitement we witness seems to be little different in kind and temper from other kinds of student ferment which has nothing to do with Africa. I zealously want Black student protest to be positive in its Africinity. I would like to see it characterized by the dignity, the gentility, the respect for elders -- even stupid elders -- which is characteristic of African culture. I must confess that much of the Black student protest I see is *white*, characterized by brusqueness, intolerance, and brutality which we all agree are Euro-American. It honors not Africa, but the Euro-American tradition. In asserting the theme of Blacker-than-thou, it succeeds in being whiter-than-white.

Even as we need a further understanding and knowledge of the Africa of our fathers, we need also a further understanding and knowledge of the Africa of our brothers. Here again DuBois was a pioneer. In 1961, he described in a nutshell his involvement with the Africa of the twentieth century:

My own study had for a long time turned toward Africa. I planned a series of charts in 1900 for the Paris Exposition, which gained a Grand Prize. I attended a Pan-African conference in London and was made secretary of the meeting and drafted its resolutions.

In 1911 the Ethical Culture Societies of the world called a races congress in London and made Felix Adler and me secretaries for America. In 1915 I published my first book on African history and there was much interest and discussion. In 1919 I planned a Pan-African Congress.... Blaise Diagne of Senegal, whose volunteers had saved France from the first on-

slaught of the Germans in World War I, induced Clemenceau to allow the Congress despite the opposition of the United States and Britain. It was a small meeting, but it aroused a West African Congress the next year which was the beginning of independence for Ghana and Nigeria. In 1921 I called a second Pan-African Congress to meet in London, Paris and Brussels. This proved a large and influential meeting, with delegates from the whole Negro world. The wide publicity it gained led to the organization of congresses in many parts of Africa by the natives. Our attempt to form a permanent organization located in Paris was betrayed but I succeeded in assembling a small meeting in London and Lisbon in 1923. I tried a fourth congress in Tunis but France forbade it. At last in 1927 I called the Fourth Pan-African Congress in New York. It was fairly well attended by American Negroes but by few Africans. Then the Second World War approached and the work was interrupted.

Meanwhile methods changed and ideas expanded. Africans themselves began to demand more voice in colonial government and the Second World War had made their cooperation so necessary to Europe that at the end actual and unexpected freedom for African colonies was in sight. Moreover there miraculously appeared Africans able to take charge of these governments. American Negroes of former generations had always calculated that when Africa was ready for freedom, American Negroes would be ready to lead them. But the event was quite opposite. The African leaders proved to be Africans, some indeed educated in the United States, but most of them trained in Europe and in Africa itself. American Negroes for the most part showed neither the education nor the aptitude for the magnificent opportunity which was suddenly offered. Indeed, it now seems that Africans may have to show American Negroes the way to freedom.

This is the bald testimony of a prodigious career of service to an idea, to a dream. And this year, in which we celebrate the one hundred and second anniversary of his birthday, we should pause in acknowledgement, respect, and affirmation of a super-human achievement in defining and realizing what is truly the most momentous problem of our time; for one truth perceived by DuBois is clear, the liberty and the liberation of Black men everywhere in the world is inextricably a single problem. As long as any Black man anywhere is circumscribed because he is Black, no Black man anywhere is truly free. This realization is not yet clear to a host of people, Black and white, who are supposedly committed to the freedom of this or that particular group of Black men.

It is either naive or dishonest to act as if the only problem in the world today were that of the freedom of Black men. I believe it is the greatest problem of the world today, but it is not the only problem nor is it a simple problem easily separated from others.

No problem in human freedom is trivial, and I think that we must stand our ground and be frightened neither by name-calling nor threats of bodily harm when we insist that there are such things as humanity and human problems, nor when we insist that no problem of human freedom is trivial. Nevertheless, it is a fact that relatively few white people in the world are circumscribed or deprived of liberty because they are white. This is the answer to those who so piously upbraid the nations of the Third World for not regarding the communist menace with the same horror that the so-called free world chooses to display. The Russian action in Czechoslovakia was not praiseworthy, but it was not racism. Here there was a question of human freedom, but the freedom of no white man anywhere else as a white man was in any way compromised by that action, which for that matter had little to do with communism itself. It was an action fully worthy of the Russia of the Czars.

But in Africa, as we turn our gaze to the South, we find Black men held in subjection to white men, who do not intend that their system will ever be changed and whose daily care is to fasten more securely the chains that bind. And we find the whole of the white world utterly -- I do not exaggerate -- utterly indifferent to this state of affairs. France sends guns to South Africa, and the United States sends capital. The white nations of the world have declared token, but wholly ineffectual sanctions against Southern Rhodesia. The Portuguese regime reposes serene in the protection of the great powers, including Soviet Russia. The World Court has declined even to render what would after all be only a nominal disavowal of South Africa's bold annexation of a territory entrusted to her fifty years ago under a League of Nations mandate. All in all, a sorry record.

But is the record of the new Black nations any better? True, they carry on unceasing agitation at the United Nations against white domination of Black people in Southern Africa, but does compassion for their Black brothers extend beyond oratory and some slight support to various groups of refugees? I fear that I see no evidence of this. Indeed, one hears that South Africa, only mildly distressed by the hot air which fills the corridors of the United Nations, is relatively satisfied with the basically "sensible" attitudes of her Black neighbors to the north.

This is, I submit, an eloquent commentary on the current status of Black Power in Africa. The only real fighting going on in Africa today finds Black people opposing each other. The challenge of African unity, so long ago articulated by DuBois, has yet to find an authentic African response. But what of Black people in the United States? How many of them know aught of today's Africa? Dare I ask: how many care? And yet until we have the awakening to consciousness of America's Black citizens and their determined resolution to use their political and moral power to force a disengagement of

the United States from the support of racist regimes in Africa, they are of little or no use to their Black brothers locked in veritable bondage. In arriving at such a state of consciousness and undertaking such a mode of action, the Black man here is merely, however, fighting his own battle. For I repeat, no Black man anywhere is free so long as any Black man anywhere is circumscribed because he is Black.

We hear much today of thinking Black, seeing Black, and feeling Black, but it will remain all pose and affectation until some solid knowledge of the real machinery of oppression is gained. Such knowledge may well prove to be power, but without it, we are powerless indeed. Merely boycotting South African lobsters and refusing to buy diamonds would not be enough. But, curiously, I am afraid I have not even heard of a Black woman's asking whether or not a diamond which may be headed her way is a product of South Africa's slave mines. I fear that many a militant sister does not even know that most of the brilliant sparklers on the market are torn from Mother Africa's bowels by brutalized Black men, and sold to enrich an intricate string of white men, stretching from Johannesburg to London and Amsterdam, thence to New York and Hometown, USA.

As a student who did not discover race yesterday, but as one who knew and honored Locke and Hansberry in their work and in their persons, I somehow feel that the greatest danger and the greatest failure lies not in the acquisition of sterile scholarship but rather in the meaningless ignorant assertion of race. It is easier to be Black than to learn Black; easier to shout than to study; easier to thump than to think.

Our pursuit of freedom through race and scholarship must partake of the wisdom of the ages wherever that is enshrined, the richness of the spirit wherever manifested, the voice of truth by whomever uttered.

The Black American poet Countee Cullen, forty years ago, cried out in

an anguish which he did not fully understand, "What is Africa To me?" Another Black American poet, Langston Hughes, answered, with a profundity he did not suspect, in "Afro-American Fragment":

So long,
So far away
Is Africa.
Not even memories alive
Save those that history books create,
Save those that songs
Beat back into the blood--
Beat out of blood with words sad-sung
In strange un-Negro tongue--
So long,
So far away
Is Africa.

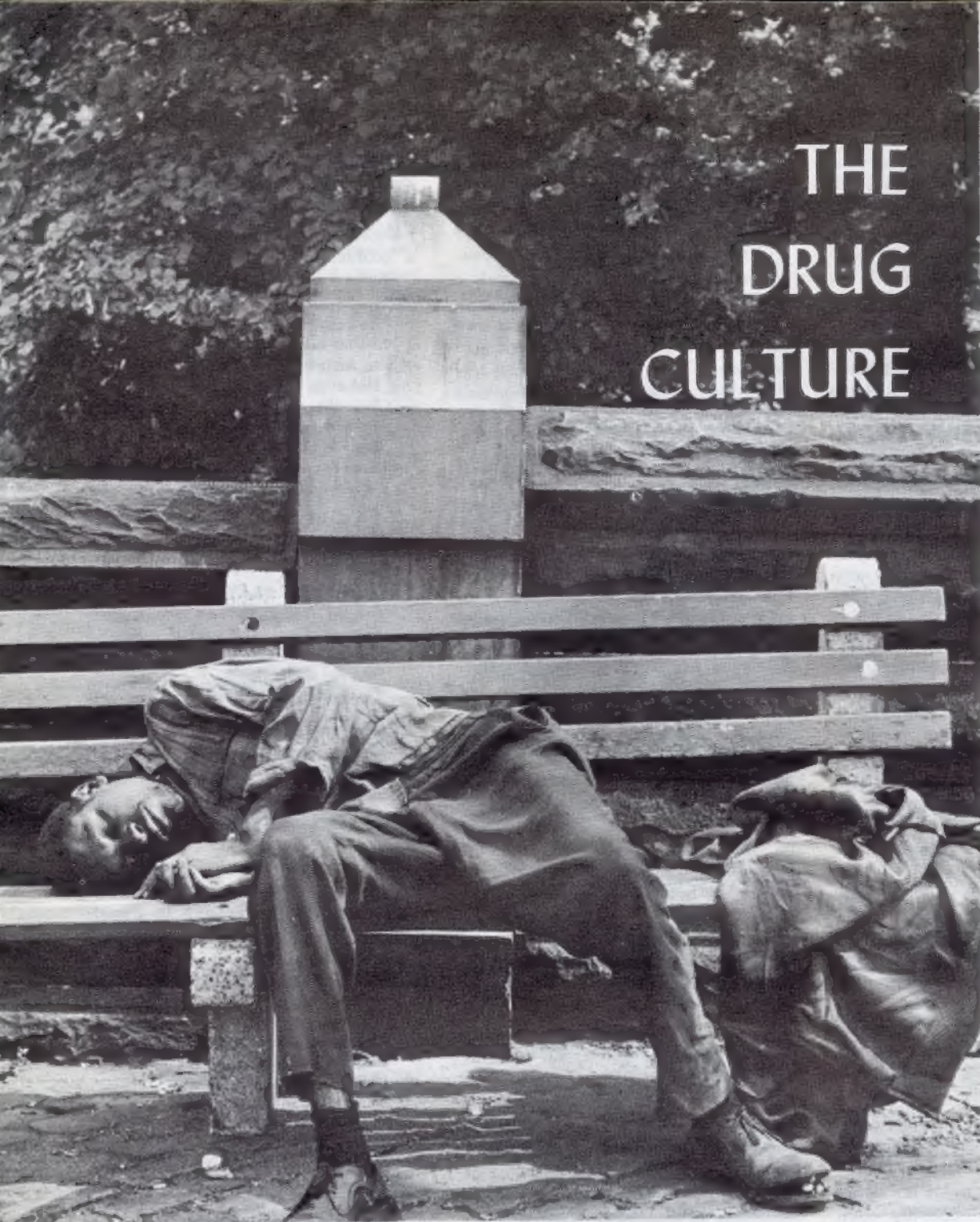
Subdued and time-lost
Are the drums--and yet
Through some vast mist of race
There comes this song
I do not understand,
This song of atavistic land,
Of bitter yearnings lost
Without a place--
So long,
So far away
Is Africa's
Dark face.

But I would leave you with a voice of today, a voice of Africa from Sao Tome. Writing in Portuguese, the poet Aldo do Spirito Santo accuses us all:

And all you hangmen
All you torturers
What have you done with my people?
What do you answer?
Where is my people?
And I answer in the silence
of voices raised
demanding justice
One by one, through all the line...

For you, tormentors,
Forgiveness has no name.
Justice shall be heard.
And the blood of lives fallen
In the forests of death,
innocent blood
drenching the earth
in a silence of terrors
shall make the earth fruitful,
crying for justice.
It is the flame of humanity
singing of hope
in a world without bonds
where liberty
is the fatherland of men....

THE DRUG CULTURE



Vance G. Allen

Headlines in the mass media scream out day after day that a drug epidemic is engulfing our land. Heroin, they say, is no longer an affliction of the "amoral or ignorant" lower classes and Black and Brown ghetto dwellers alone; its use is spreading like wildfire among the children of the respectable, white middle class.

Liberation News Service

As the daily press fans the flames, and as frightened (and voting) middle-class parents begin to demand action which will deal with "the problem," treatment "experts" and politicians are moving to the fore with the "solutions." For the past thirty years, when American addicts were primarily poor and from the Black and Brown com-

munities, the same men who are now talking about "answers" were stono silent.

There is simply no comparison between the magnitude of the drug addiction problem in oppressed Black and Brown communities and in a white middle-class setting. Even though a white addict may be isolated or shunned in his own

society, the Black and Brown community *itself* is strangled by a "drug culture" which affects every man, woman and child who lives in the ghetto.

A Muslim from Bedford-Stuyvesant, a follower of Malcolm X, describes the total destruction unleashed on his

people and his community by the multi-million dollar heroin industry as follows: "The Black community suffers the loss of its youth through physical and mental deterioration as a result of drug addiction. The Black community loses financially because the only way for the junkie

to exist is by stealing. The only one he steals from is the Black community. He's not going to steal in the white community because he is not allowed to exist in the white community....The white community benefits from any financial transaction ending up in the white economy



(no Black economy exists) and drug traffic is a very lucrative business."

And Michael Tabor, a former addict and a member of the Black Panther Party (he is now on trial with the Panther 21 in New York City) asserts even further that:

"(The power structure is) delighted that Black youths have fallen victim to the plague.... they realise

that as long as they can keep our Black youths standing on the street corner 'nodding' from a 'shot' of heroin, they won't have to worry about us waging an effective struggle for liberation."

It could be argued that the relatively small and powerless populace of "hard" drug addicts was singled out as the perpetual whipping boy

of a moralistic and puritanical America -- whose more ambitious prohibition campaign was quashed by those who craved an alcoholic "high" when drinkers banded together to repeal the Volstead Act in the mid-30's. The narcotic addicts were labelled criminals and forced into criminal activity.

cont next pg

Once the prohibitionists had created a criminal drug clientele, law enforcement agencies moved in to clear the streets. The affluent and middle-class white communities -- fearful that desperate Black and Brown addicts might venture into their neighborhoods -- threw support to those who adopted a "get tough" line. And the resulting scare campaign--waged by both the politicians and the press in the 50's -- led to the passage of extremely harsh measures which took no time to distinguish between the victim of the plague and the perpetrator of it.

And now, the move afoot to reduce penalties for the mere possession of a drug (heroin or marijuana) and to increase the penalties for pushers, once again is in response to the needs of a frightened, middle-class segment of our society. In effect, the "liberalized" laws only represent a liberalization for the drug user who can afford to purchase his drugs. The poor, ghetto addict (who *must* sell to support his habit) will continue to be prosecuted to the full extent of an even harsher law.

Harsh drug laws have been used not only against helpless individuals, but are increasingly being utilized as a means of political repression and control against two potentially powerful forces for social change -- the Third World community and the white radical youth. After all, one must count on the honesty of the police when they report that an individual was carrying dope. Not only can politically "dangerous" individuals be picked off and sent away for years, but Black militants point out a more pervasive function of drug control laws:

"The existence of the junkie, and all that goes with his existence enables the white power structure to keep an army of police in our community, supposedly for our protection from the very same junkie that he created. While the police

are busy protecting the Black community, they manage also to control and contain us..."

So far, the "solutions" to narcotic addiction proposed by the Establishment, are, at worst, themselves repressive; at best, they are designed merely to provide limited, physical "relief" from the degradation and pain experienced by the addict -- whether middle-class or ghetto-bound. Most drug law "reformers" stop short of demanding that *all* repressive laws that have been perpetrated under the guise of controlling drugs -- the most recent being the Nixon-Mitchell "no-knock" bill -- must be totally dismantled.

By now there is abundant evidence more than indicating that "law and order" measures have not only failed to control drug traffic, but have encouraged addiction. It is widely acknowledged among liberals that drug control laws have been used almost exclusively to punish the victim. Many who would "reform" drug laws would conclude that we must either legalize the outlawed substance -- in this case, heroin -- or preferably, find another less politically volatile narcotic substance, which the public will agree to legalize -- which in America, is methadone.

At present, the proliferating treatment programs offer no "cure" for addiction. First of all, the few currently acceptable modes of treatment -- designed for the most part by white professionals -- have little chance of success for great numbers of Black and Brown addicts. The very insistence of medical men and self-proclaimed "experts" that even if they don't have answers now, that given enough time and resources they will find the panacea for addiction, is dangerous. Not only do such programs raise false expectations and absorb the energy of community people, but they provide a safe funnel for the limited government money

going into treatment.

If the white, middle-class crusaders are really interested in combatting addiction in the oppressed communities, they ought to insist that considerable money be poured into the ghetto and let the community decide where to put it.

Appropriate "treatment" to some Blacks and Puerto Ricans might mean housing and jobs while to others it would mean setting up liberation schools to build Black and Brown consciousness. Community organizations -- from local narcotic agencies to groups of Muslims, the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords -- are beginning to serve notice on those who would exploit their people, both "the drug pushers and the professional program pushers."

There is no quick legal or medical "fix" for drug addiction. Any such superimposed solution will at best only ease the pain of the drug casualties. Only when political struggle, waged by the people who are most oppressed in our society, succeeds in changing the conditions which are influencing entire generations to seek fulfillment, economic and spiritual, through drugs, will youth -- Black, Brown, and white -- feel there is a meaningful alternative to drugs.

Drugs are inundating and crippling oppressed communities with the tacit approval of the power structure, and the struggle against drugs can only be successful in the context of the struggle for total liberation. As Panther Michael Tabor says:

"As long as our young Black brothers and sisters are chasing the bag, as long as they are trying to cop a fix, the rule of our oppressors is secure and our hopes for freedom are dead. It is the youth who make the revolution and it is the youth who carry it out. Without our young, we will never be able to forge a revolutionary force."

FOR JOAN

(One Night at the 19th Hold)

Epitome of
Beautiful Blackness
Tall and regal queen
Swan of Africa
Branch of her first dawn
Her life tree's
Noble extension,
Before my eyes now --
Absorbing me.

Black princes
Reclaiming your lost crown
That for-real royalty
Not snotty, not ivory tower
But down baby, down
Nitty gritty
Buttermilk and yams
Corn bread and black-eyed peas.
No caviar or anchovies, here.

No ears pretending
Muzart, Brahms and Bach,
But Otis Redding, James Brown, Howling Wolf
But Trane, Bird and Jug and Miles and Monk
But Billie, Ella, Dinah, Sarah, Aretha
No Mario Lanza/Enrico Caruso, here.

Real/like earth
And air. Black sounds:
Drum boom/trumpet scream
Clarinet whisper/guitar whine
Trombone groan/piano rumble
All here, like voodoo
Possessing me.

--- Zack Gilbert

SLAVE SHIP

Wrist and ankle
chained
kept
old & still
in the hold
six hundred
standing
between deck
in irons
the dead
and the living
into two
rows
horse beans
red pepper
diet
black water fever
malaria
crunch
in bone
& blood

RUNAWAYS

Nigger ran
running
hard but not
fast or
far
dogs at his ankles
or anything
they could
get
-- Sam Cornish



NUT - BROWN :

Technicolored bluebrown statue coming up ahead on the road. Sand is sandy windy. Nut-Brown Mud Woman lion's body showing. And stars are very far away digging on their far away distance from me. From us. From everything else.

It was one of those short but sweet things you know, she said. Seems so ridiculous now. You know. You know what. That's what it is. Delphonics sing, "The Shadow of Your Smile." Just remembering, you see. I should have been married two years ago, you see, she said to me.

Yet, all I saw was bluebrown statue closer ahead on the road. Do lions bite? She had stayed alone with me just two hours rapping and digging on the TV. Look at this picture of him, she said to me. And this cat in the picture in her hand was a boss cat who could really do her boss. You could tell he was straight. And you knew he could have been married just two months beforehand.

Still, all I saw was bluebrown Sphinx statue of Bunny. Of Life. Of Beginning. She had blown my mind just before I got into the conversation with who I was looking at now. She who now talks of what could have been. Delphonics sang "Alfie" on the record player. Are we meant to be kind, Alfie? Are only fools kind, Alfie? God? Allah? Om? Life? Huh' Huh!

But Bunny's face was a Nubian Queen interested in Outer Space. So far away from me. Can non-believers believe in Love, Alfie? Huh? Blue-brown statue is a woman. She stares at stars, at animals, at parks with rapists in it. And her man is known but not found. She will not be deterred in finding her star, her man, her life, herself. We look each other in the eye without ever glancing. We just rapped on about ourselves becoming one within the without of ourselves. Love is the blue of night in which the stars reside. Love is the black backdrop of space. Without ourselves. Within ourselves. Each knowing and proud of ourselves. Becoming one in ourselves. Ourselves. Speeding with blue. Dionne Warwick sings, "It's the End of My World." "Valley of the Dolls" comes next and Dionne cried, "When will I, Where will I, Who will I, How will I know....Why?"

So this girl Bunny she told me goodnight and opened the door to her room. The Sphinx had been passed and as she left me her lion's body became visible again. Ourselves. Within and without ourselves. Our. Selves. Ourselves. And I dug me. And I dug her. And I dug we within and without. Rapist breathing easy in the park.

A Soul Psalm

by Clay Goss

But back to now while JoAnn tells me that she really wanted to marry that cat in the picture. She said his letters were so very very beautiful. That she had burned every one of them. They didn't seem like they were addressed to her. He sent ten letters to her even when he was in Vietnam. He always signed his letters "A Love Supreme." "A Love Supreme." And JoAnn started crying. She started crying, forgetting that I was in the room. Looking off into the ceiling seeing clouds, so it seemed. Seeing the Sun. The Sun over California where she said this cat lived. And JoAnn got up and grabbed the phone. Dialing long distance to the Source. To the Mediator. To the lost and yet always found. To the Always Cat who two years ago in the face of death still remembered her and wrote ten letters saying "A Love Supreme, A Love Supreme."

Yet all I saw was Bunny back on the road stiff as the statue of the Sphinx. So Beautiful. So Beautiful. So Beautiful when you got in front of her and looked at her. Without and within. Looked and listened as she said she dug Outer Space. Dug on what she was. Damn and you knew you had dug on yourself. And you were you. Right here. She was there. Right there. Within and without by yourself yet with her. Ourselves. Yet....Our. Selves. Each digging Outer and Inner Space. Out there. In there. Us. Yet her there me here. Blue background love with us residing thereof. In thereof. Out there of. We. Us. Alone. Together. Yet so very far apart. She back down the road, lion's body showing. Who was her Sun? Me. Yeah, me. Yet I was any girl's Sun. She any man's Sphinx. She anyone's Queen. Me anyone's Sun. Love Supreme. Stars millions of miles away from each other. Out and without and further without. Blue is where we resided. Sending parallel beams of light. Vibrations. She Black and absorbing yet radiating parallel beams. Blue was love backdrop where we resided. I had returned to my apartment and was now talking to another Mary. She, Bunny, was reacting to Life outside. Being her own thing. Her own reflection of the Sun. Her own self, light place in Blues Land. Blues People Yea! Blues People. Yea. We! A Love Supreme. A Love Supreme. A Love Supreme. And I wondered who would be her man? Who would be my woman. Knowing already that she was my woman. I her man. Yet still millions of miles apart. Doing Our Thing. Residing and sharing the backdrop of Blue. Of park. Of night. So if life

belongs only to the strong, Alfie, I guess I just be weak. Cause what are words. Shit, non-believers can believe. I believe in love. Cause I know people just exist being strong. Just exist being weak. Just exist being something cept stars shining their own, own way. Their own beautiful way. Shining as a man. Not being a man. Not being strong, Not being weak. Shining and Posing like a woman. Not being a woman. Not being strong like the lion. Not being the Sphinx. Just shining and attracting like the Sphinx. Shining and attracting like a woman. And I am Black, Black and absorbing. Black and original. Black and original riding on a sightseeing bus through the cosmic universe. And I see stars. And I feel stars. And I know the Sphinx digs on me. And sees through me. And knows who I am. I know that she can. A Love Supreme. A Love Supreme. Temptations sing, "With Their Hands." Next they sing, "There's a place for us. I'll take you there. Somehow. Somewhere. Someplace. Someway. Hold my hand universe and we're halfway there. I'll take you there. Somehow. Someplace. Somehow." I will she will. Bunny will. I will. Temptations sing, "Try to Remember." Yea. It's nice to remember dreams. Experience. You. Who and how. Without and within. Love and Ember about to be alone. She. Me. Together. Apart. Together. Apart. Blue background town of love where we live. Who will be her man? Who will be my woman? Uniques of the only unique. Apart and without, within and without, within and without yet within. Within-apart. She digging on Outer Space. Me being me past the jungle beyond myself to then. Try to remember. Temptations sang, "Who can I turn to?" Well Bunny, you can turn to me. Damn the rapist hiding in the park. Cause I'm your Sun yet not your man yet maybe your man. I am cause I'm not. You are cause you're not. And in being not both of us are so very are. Cause we reside in Blue. Blues People living in Blues. Black people living in Blues. Blues shining Blues on Black people trying to love and do their thing. Their particular respective common yet uncommon, group, communal, universal thing. Their thing. Together-apart. Touching without and within without touching at all. A guitar strums electric blues from Watts' 103rd Street band. The Mediator speaks next. Saying, Remember. Try to Remember the Drums. The You's of yesterday relative to today. And some-days I knew I loved Bunny. And some-days she proba-

cont next pg

bly loved me. And today we love. Without touching. Both going our separate yet common ways to ourselves. Together-apart. *Knowing it.* Knowing it. Dig it *Knowing it.* Out in Outer Inner Space. Lost but already found. Found but digging on being lost. Knowing it. Without touching. Without knowing. Without feeling while holding hands and running away from the rapist in the park. Today. What about tomorrow? Caught up in Outer-Space, Innerly and Outerly. Why did we run, girl? Why? Where? Why did we run, girl? Artisties sing, "I'm gonna miss you." Jay Wiggins sings, "Sad Girl. You look so sad. Did he break your heart? That's too bad. I guess you see how love can be. Come on Girl. Forget that Guy. Forget that Guy." Love is apart-together Brown dirt statue up and down the road of stars in the blue love sky where you and I reside. Within yet without. Without touching. Everybody's somebody's fool. You're no exception to the rule. A Love Supreme, A Love Supreme.

JoAnn goes off to sleep dreaming of what could have been two years ago. Bunny closes the door to the dormitory in my face. She says goodnight with a smile on her face. Her paws show out between her smile. While I dig on myself alone yet together with her. Not her man. Yet her man. A Love Supreme. A Love Supreme. Sleep comes into my mind. Everyone waits together for the future. Sleep is a mere trivia soothing times for against tides. Within and Without. The Sun rises in the West. Sets in the East which is someplaces West. West. West. And the North Star shines bright digging on itself in vain Bunny doesn't. I don't. We do dig on the North Star and the West. The Sun. North Pole. South Pole. Two opposite directions yet each is cold. So alike and cold. So common to each other yet apart. Apart and without from each other with the equator as their source. Their origin. Sun rises every morning in our hearts, girl. Sun sets every night in our minds, girl. Within and without. Without touching. Yet touching. Without knowing. Within knowing. What is us. What is nothing. What is real. What is us. What is really nothing yet everything something nothing? We. Us. Apart so together nothing everything. JoAnn dreams. We you I dream. Without touching. Within touching. Together apart knowing and being ultra cool. All digging Outer Space and steadfast in who will be our man. Who will be our woman. Who will be our our. Ourselves. Ourselves. Blues people inhabitants of a background colored love. So within yet so without that we're both together while neither apart. Bunny and I. She together-apart....Blues peoples....Apart....Rapist in the Park....In the Jungle....Outer Space.... Without Touching....10 letters signed:

A Love Supreme	A Love Supreme
A Love Supreme	A Love Supreme
A Love Supreme	A Love Supreme
A Love Supreme	A Love Supreme

A Love Supreme
A Love Supreme

Without touching. Without. Touching. JoAnn dreams. Bunny lives. I live. We all love. A Love Supreme.... Why are we so close without touching? Without touching. Why do we walk down the street holding hands? Without touching. Why do we look at each other's soul and spirit? Without touching. Why do we love and get married and have kids? Without touching. Why do we touch and feel our bodies and souls? Without touching. Without touching without knowing ourselves. Without knowing within within and without without touching. Without knowing why we do everything without knowing who and why we love. And why we are. And why we laugh. And why we cry. And why we look at each other with dreams in our eyes, and stars in our dreams and happiness in our hearts without knowing without touching without and within so close cause we're so apart without thinking. Without digging on we within and we without shining and living and crying and trying to be free and really we touching within and touching without loving everything like ourselves. Understanding understanding why we we and apart and together touching without touching together in love. A Love Supreme. A Love Supreme and touching. And loving. And crying. And trying to be free and trying to be we touching touching if not really together together starting starting all over all over again one more time like the first that is the last time love time touching within and without touching...Tomorrow A Love Supreme. A Love Supreme.

Hello Girl will you be my woman right now without touching? Without touching without touching a thing *supreme*. So fine. So clean. Like rust clouds speeding on ahead of the group. Cars easing up the highway heading for a lost honeymoon. Rice strains on some bride's teeth. Two vacant seats at a never-happened reception. Ice cream for the kids. Live music for phantom dancers tired of working all week. In at 8 out at 5. In. Out. Within. Without. Live music. FM radio. Coltrane chanting revelation in the background on 33 and 1/3. Wife over at the piano keeping up with even him. With even him. Now he's dead. Dead and said. Said and apart. Apart and within. Within and without yet within from her too like us in the past. Me in the past. JoAnn in the past. Bunny in the past. Me in the past in the jungle beyond myself to then. Rapist still hiding in the park ignored. Blues still where we lived.

Yet all I saw was technicolored bluebrown statue coming up ahead on the road. Sand was sandy windy. DoDo Brown Mud Woman lion's paw showing. While Dyke and the Blazers sang, "We Got More Soul."



J O H N C O L T R A N E

A Love Supreme

News in Brief

Liberation News Service

Denmark Weighs Eldridge Cleaver

Copenhagen, Denmark: A commission has been formed by the Danish government to decide whether or not Eldridge Cleaver will get an official guarantee that he won't be extradited to the U.S. if he visits Denmark.

Cleaver has been named "Honored Artist of the Year" by the students at Aarhus University but cannot go to receive his prize until the guarantee is given.

The guarantee will be given only if the commission -- composed largely of conservative Danish politicians -- finds that Eldridge is a political refugee. This would be the first official Danish recognition of the U.S. as an oppressive state that persecutes its political opposition.

The Trial of Lonnie McLucas

New Haven, Conn: The lawyers of Lonnie McLucas are making a last ditch effort to stop his trial, but defense motions are routinely denied. One of the New Haven Black Panther Nine, who are charged with the murder of Alex Rackley, McLucas' case has been separated from the other defendants for, his lawyers believe, just one reason: Judge Harold Mulvey and State's Attorney Donald Markle hope that since McLucas is less known nationally, they can convict him quickly without strong movement response. And once the conviction is on the books, it will then be easier to convict the others, including Black Panther Party National Chairman Bobby Seale.

The defense lawyers moved that all charges against McLucas be dropped on the grounds that the Panther Party had received such "massive prejudicial and hostile publicity" in Connecticut that "Lonnie cannot receive a fair and impartial trial as guaranteed by the 5th, 6th, and 14th Amendments." (The *New Haven Register*, the daily



Lonnie McLucas

New Haven newspaper, for example, had first page mug shots of all the defendants the morning after they were busted, under a banner headline. The *Register's* story was the official police version of the "crime" -- they didn't even bother to use the word "alleged.")

After denying the defense lawyers the necessary time to file a written brief on the motion, Mulvey ruled that despite all the evidence, prejudicial publicity about McLucas and the other Panthers did not matter. The defense motion was turned down.

The second defense motion, which challenged the process used in Connecticut to select juries, fared no better. According to established procedures, Jury Commissioner Edward Horowitz is in charge of compiling jury lists from each town, sending them questionnaires, and then deciding who will actually be submitted as a juror. After the defense subpoenaed Commissioner Horowitz, law students working for the defense spent hours going through the forms of prospective jurors whom Horowitz had rejected. It seems the following categories of prospective jurors are disqualified:

People who respond in the affirmative to the written question: "Are you opposed to the form of government of the United States?"

People who have not gone to school for the right number of years (the number was never revealed), unless in a responsible business position. Horowitz said that such a "business" position was the only thing that could take the place of a formal education.

People who move from one town to another

People who don't register to vote.

People whose employers will not make up the salary they lose while missing work for jury duty

People who are college students -- just for being students, even if they meet all other qualifications.

One man was excluded solely

because he was educated in Russia. A 68-year-old woman was excluded, according to Horowitz, because "her signature looks like something might be wrong." It turns out she is also Black. She met all other qualifications.

The defense subpoenaed the chairmen of the jury commission for every town in New Haven County, 27 in all. Out of two days of testimony came a curious picture of exactly who gets on juries:

Mrs. Bradley, an elderly Republican from Derby, testified that she likes to put retired people on jury duty.

Mr. Parker, an elderly Republican from North Haven, after taking great pride in his town's computer method for randomly selecting juries, testified that they excluded anyone who had been arrested, whether or not they were convicted.

Mr. Martin, an elderly Democrat from Woodbridge, testified that he excluded women with young children from jury duty, whether or not they asked to be excluded.

In the state of Connecticut, it seems you can't sit on a jury unless you are white, educated, old, financially successful, and content with the American way of life.

A Young Lord Is Busted in El Barrio

New York: Juan "Fi" Ortiz is sixteen years old and the Minister of Finance of the Young Lords Party in New York.

On June 13th, he was sitting in the house of a brother from the Lords when the police arrived and — arrested him on charges of kidnapping, armed robbery and assault.

Four different versions of Fi's supposed crime appeared in four different newspaper accounts; all of them were variations of the theme that 21-year-old Jack McCall of Newark, N.J., was kidnapped on an

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Puerto Ricans "liberate" food"

East Harlem street, forced into a car at knifepoint, driven to Brooklyn, struck on the head and then robbed of forty dollars. Police say that McCall escaped, reported the license number of the car to police, who checked it, found the car and then arrested Ortiz -- all in the space of several hours.

Fi's bail was set at \$1,000 -- even the judge must have found the police story a little hard to take, for the bail probably approaches a record low on charges of kidnapping, armed robbery and assault.

In any event, no one in El Barrio, the Puerto Rican ghetto in East Harlem, believed the story. On the night of the arrest, following a Lords Party rally in front of the People's Church (which was "liberated" by the Lords for eleven days last January; see *LIBERATOR*, February 1970), about a thousand Puerto Rican men and women of all ages "liberated food" and furniture stores, set trash on fire and fought with the police.

By one A.M., the police said that nine persons had been arrested, charged variously with assaulting policemen, looting, harassment, and reckless endangerment.

The Barrio uprising followed three nights of violent protest in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, where the people -- furious over the almost total lack of garbage collection -- set hundreds of fires in vacant buildings and in piles of rubbish which lay on the streets. The Brownsville uprising resulted in scores of garbage trucks finally being dispatched to clean up the area -- to clean up, that is, the mountains of burned rubbish that blocked the community's streets. Brownsville remains the poorest of all the city's ghettos, and El Barrio is not far behind -- and the people in both these communities are finding ways of dealing with that problem.

Was Patrice Lumumba murdered?



How did black Africa's first martyr, really die? Was Patrice Lumumba murdered on Tshombe's orders or was his death really "accidental"? How was the U.N. involved and what roles did Hammarskjold and Kasavubu play?

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MIND PROTRUDING

on the road again
eating the soft
meat of experience,
someone asked me who
am i, i told him to
suck on my finger and
find out.
on the black asphalt
of night in great
swallows of speed,
getting high
going faster
till the wind numbs
my body away,
out in the
awkward state of
mind without workable
or feeling limbs,
i feel like a dead
tree that can think
or in some freaky yoga
position with just my
mind protruding.
coming to some point
ahead of everybody else,
i feel quite alone

being the first man
without a body.
so i sing on my bike
just a head now like lettuce
floating down 66
to my existence and not
california wondering what
those plastic arms and legs
are for when they do me no good.
in the quickness of speed i forget
my body, my mind now takes
preference over the matter.
but i try to return to my
senses and tell my arms
to slow the machine down
to rest along the highway
but they won't listen to
me any more, divorced,
alienated, they listen to
no one. on they drive till
crashing and i watch them
carry away my body as i yell
and scream from my mind
and they pay no attention
to a twenty-third century
man.

--- Richard Latta

Book Review

Defender of the Angels, by Jess Kimbrough. New York: Macmillan, 1969. 273 pp. \$6.95.

Books about cops ought to be required reading. Not that we don't know more about them than we care to know -- and from an early age too. No young blood was ever taken in by those poseurs from the third-grade reader who helped you lovingly across the street or gave you ice cream and let you wear their hat when you got lost. But the times demand that we study these dudes carefully. Ought to establish anthropology courses in grammar school to study the types. Three books should be the primers: *The Police Establishment* by Ramparts editor William Turner, *The Big Blue Line* by the news writer Edward Cray, and *The Algiers Motel Incident* by novelist John Hershey. Of course, these authors are white and so it is not surprising that they don't go the whole distance in recognizing that there is a consistency to the faggotry, racism, right-wingedness, and that pathological patriotism that makes true love of country embarrassing if not obscene; a pattern, a culture. And though the three do much to reveal what sort of character or temperament is attracted to police work and what forces there shape him further into a yahoo, they -- like whites before them who zeroed in on the "peculiar institution" of slavery and the character of the slavemaster, like whites today who view on TV irrefutable evidence of police brutality -- hang onto the notion of the "bad cop," the isolated error, the one sick case who got in by mistake. For after all, policemen in Dick and Jane land simply do not behave that way. So it's them ungrateful hippies and them badmouth niggers and them homo-pinko-agitators students that are makin' all the trouble.

On Black cops we haven't got much and that's too bad. For we've fallen into a dangerous thinkin' that a cop or university teacher or Madison Avenue ad man or Pentagon janitor or most anybody who ain't doin' what we're doin' is necessarily

a Tom, or in current coin, a counter-revolutionary, and therefore an anathema. Which goes to show what silly purists we can be, how cold we can get, how very shortsighted we are. Cause when the deal goes down -- hell, before that, like now -- we need a whole lotta family in a whole lotta places, privy to a whole lotta various bits of information. In day-to-day life, a Black cop can save a Black life, can protect us from a white cop, a white gun...and probably has more often than we know.

Anyway, a retired Black cop has written a sort of autobiographical novel, chronicling his adventures as protector of private property and upholder of the law in the bygone days of Los Angeles. He tells what it feels like to enforce the law against your own people, your own friends, sometimes arresting an acquaintance who's already paid off the white sergeant and been double-crossed. Of what it's like to be the victim of the inequities of a sick society he's sworn to protect, meaning frequently that he's got to storm in and drop the very people he's been drinking with for years -- lest the warrant serving be left to the Klansman in the precinct. Of the cost, emotional and physical, of working with white cops eager to shoot up Dicky Town or Cholo (Mexican) Town, including him. Of trying not to take undue advantage of the friendships he's made on the block to get his work done.

The book doesn't start well. Sounds like one of those bravo-me accounts of how one native son rose above the drab and ugly crudeness of his Black surroundings and made Detective Sergeant in no time. And in the early pages we run across far too many statements like "Negroes in the mass are lawless and irresponsible." But it gets better and it's worth reading. I'm not sure it gives any insight into the sort of things that currently plague us -- infiltrating agents, bloods participating in the murder of Panthers and such like. But it sure does spell out what the Black cop faces.

Steve Hinton, the fictional Kimbrough, is a big dude who reads books, drinks cheap booze called jackass, doesn't talk or smile much, and is good to his woman. He's got the roughest beat in the district -- the Mexican and Black wards. He knows everybody and everybody seems to be willing to give him information or warn him of danger. He moves up in the ranks quickly, for he knows the district and solves cases and he knows the ways of Charlie and keeps out of fire, though frequently his fellow cops shoot at him or set him up for danger. The people on the block are presented kindly and dramatically and to a depressing degree, hopelessly. And while the dialogue gets a little flamboyant at times -- everybody talks in those lengthy figures of speech, borrowing metaphors from the game of cards and winding sentences into blues figures (all the old barbers on 125th Street talk like that still) -- we come to genuinely care about the people and, thus, sympathize with Hinton's conflict, for he knows damn well who the real criminals and thugs are, and he knows too, as one cracker told him outright, that if he attempted to arrest a white man he'd get his head blown off.

Somehow Hinton manages to keep his sanity, though he loses his health, and retires, spending his time sunning himself in the park with other lonelies and writing this book. He spans several generations, so his views on riots, so-called militance, cop work and the like would be a fitting epilogue. Nowadays, he tells us, "better guns are in the hands of more literate policemen....Strangely, of late, they seem to have reverted to the fang and claw more readily than the none-too-bright, slow-thinking bunkheads of my generation. We did make some attempt to sort of weigh the situation before us. Now it is a greater firepower and wider range of disabling gases to disperse a mob demanding something the policeman may not know a thing about." Indeed.

-- Toni Cade Bambara

Human suffering is the basic condition of our lives; too basic, perhaps. Oppression, degradation, the psychic and physical slaughter of humans the world over is what, in a great sense, we *do*. All of us. We participate, even to the extent of designing systematic and rhetorical responses to the horror we know and see, responses designed not to deal with our wretched world but rather to make it the subject of clever phraseology.

Athol Fugard, the South African playwright, manages to remind us of how far the twentieth century has taken us away from ourselves in *Boesman and Lena*, a powerful drama currently being presented at New York's Circle-in-the-Square Theater. Fugard is white. He is unable to leave South Africa because the government of that country will not grant him a passport. Before the fact of what his plays have to say (*Blood Knot* and *Hello and Goodbye* were previously presented here) is the reality of the man's conflict with one of the world's most criminal regimes. We can respect him first of all for being an outcast in his own country, a public enemy of a fascist state.

And we can respect his dramatic craftsmanship, his ability to capture and explore the complexities of a relentlessly unglamorous human relationship.

Into the New York theater, a place devoted to exhibiting the spectacularly unreal, Fugard has sent Boesman and his woman Lena to tell us not so much of their sorrows, their agony, but specifically of their survival. In doing so, the author and his characters have informed us... told us that man's ability

to endure remains constant even if his sensibilities and compassion do not.

Boesman and Lena, are two South African "coloreds," drifting spirits caught in the racial madness of a nation where their mixed blood consigns them to a limbo of confusion and hopelessness. Boesman rages, and in his continuing fury resides the pain of all men robbed of a sense of themselves as men.

Beneath her facade of strength and resiliency is the anguish Lena lives daily in trying to make a life out of the many broken things that lie scattered around her... memories of a dead child, a long life of squalid shacks and bad food, violence and endless agonies.

The man and his woman are on the run. All the possessions of their battered world are on their backs - blankets, pans, a few bottles of wine. Their flight is an old story to them, their lives are a race to nowhere and to nothing, they run because they know of no way to stop, are familiar with no life this side of fear and constant wandering. When they come to the Swartskops mudflat, a grim area with an appearance as bleak as their future, they stop.

The hours pass with squabbling, threats, all manner of assault and insult. Boesman and Lena visit injury upon one another as regularly as they breath the fetid air around them, and in these acts of deathless brutality we witness the final horror of colonialism -- the impotence it produces in its victims.

Having no one he can fight against, no one to exact payment from for the brutalization done to him, Boesman smashes his woman's body and face,

drinks to forget the half-person he is, and wonders when death will end a life he despises but clings to. Clings to life? Tomorrow may be different.

Better? No, that's too much. Different, possibly. But not better. At any rate Boesman waits, waits with all of us.

"Hurry down sunshine," the old Blues tune says, "See what tomorrow bring."

And Lena is with him, to provoke and antagonize, to humanize in some way the brute Boesman has become. He continues his journey because she aggravates him into continuing. An enemy a lover, a man... What does it matter? Lena is the voice Boesman must hear, the flesh he needs to touch in order to know it has not all ended, he is not alone, struggling for no reason and against no one. Somebody... anybody is still close enough to be real.

The play is long. Sometimes tedious. As is life. But the material is brilliantly structured. Fugard examines the minutest details of a life most of us would ignore were it not legitimized in theatrical terms by an artist of Fugard's ability. In the sense suggested by Genet in his elevation of the thief to sainthood, we are aware of our own worth not for what it is, but for what it becomes when compared to the vulgarity of those ruined souls "beneath" us.

In performance terms, *Boesman and Lena* is a masterpiece for the playing offered to us by Ruby Dee. As Lena she gives the finest performance I have seen in the theater this year. She is inspired by each one of the levels she explores in the role (and there are several).

When an old African enters the

cont next pg

small encampment Boesman has set up, Lena approaches him to look again for the thread of humanity that has for so long eluded her. She fails. The man is a Black tribesman who speaks no language Lena can understand. Boesman cares only enough to resent the intrusion.

Later, the old man dies, and in a rage, Boesman kicks and punches the corpse, then must flee from the possible accusation of murder. Once again, at the end of the play, he has found still another reason to run. Lena leaves with him, as yet helpless in the face of the forces that shape and bind both their lives.

Ruby Dee becomes Lena more totally than any actress I can recall has become any character. Her work as Boesman's Lena is flawless...coarse and poetic...unlettered but pulsing with wisdom. And, as

the Lena who tries to comfort a dying old man, she is possibly even more complete, more thorough. For here, she plays essentially a solo portrait. But she does so without losing the excellent and vital living rhythm of the role, without sacrificing any of the fluency she has invested in her work.

She is, quite simply, magnificent. James Earl Jones brings his now fabled massive dignity to the part of Boesman and in one sense fails to make it work for him. Because he is a big man, a physically imposing man, and because he plays from this particular sense of himself, Jones offers us only one dimension, one facet of Boesman (a role, incidentally, not so well written as that of Lena). Boesman's threat to Lena is entirely physical, which may be a comment Fugard wants to make about men in

relationship to women. But I felt as I watched the play that a smaller, less menacing Boesman would have brought more to the conflict than the one presented. And I mean smaller in symbolic terms, smaller in a way I believe Jones could accomplish. A Boesman whose image rises or falls on his beating or not beating Lena is not a complete portrait.

As the old man, Zakes Mokae is an inscrutable representative of the Third World, a world we are, despite our efforts to understand it, less knowledgeable about every day.

The old man sits, mumbles, stares. At what? Things we have not seen. He is natural man, an extension of the earth he stands on...dies on. We do not know him.

Mokae is a compelling figure.

The play was directed by John Berry. He is to be commended.

FIRST, THEY WOKE UP

Then, the poems walked off the page,
headed for the cellar,
& the pickles.

--Terry Stokes



Richard Reaves

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